

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AIDAC
SUBJ: LEBANON DISASTER RELIEF: DISPLACED PERSONS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 7590 ACTION SECSTATE INFO DAMASCUS
21 SEP QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BEIRUT 7590

AIDAC

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: LEBANON DISASTER RELIEF: DISPLACED PERSONS

1. SUMMARY. THE LEBANESE OFFICE OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (OSD)
SAYS NEARLY HALF MILLION DISPLACED AND NEEDY PERSONS IN
LEBANON. CONVERSATIONS WITH ICRC AND UNHCR REPRESENTATIVES
SHOW PRIORITY NEED FOR FOOD, BLANKETS, CLOTHING, COOKING
UTENSILS, WATER PUMPS, HOUSING AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL. APPROACH
OF WINTER MAKES RELIEF ASSISTANCE ESPECIALLY URGENT. END
SUMMARY.

2. ON SEP 15, UNHCR MIDDLE EAST REPRESENTATIVE DR. EBERHARD
JAHN CALLED ON EMBOFF AT END OF HIS FOUR-DAY FACT-FINDING
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MISSION IN LEBANON AND ON SEP 16 DR. JOHN BULLE, ICRC MEDICAL
COORDINATOR FOR LEBANON, VISITED EMBASSY TO DISCUSS REFUGEE
SITUATION.

3. JAHN AND BULLE AGREE SITUATION OF DISPLACED PERSONS IN LEBANON REQUIRES URGENT ATTENTION. JAHN IMPRESSION IS THAT MOST URGENT NEEDS ARE IN SOUTH LEBANON AND IN KOURA, TRIPOLI AND AKKAR AREAS IN THE NORTH. HE QUOTES LEBANESE OFFICE OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (OSD) FIGURES THAT LEBANON CONTAINS AT LEAST 440,000 NEEDY PERSONS, EXCLUDING PALESTINIANS. (OSD DEFINITION OF NEEDY INCLUDES THE DISPLACED, THE HANDICAPPED, AND FAMILIES IN WHICH BREADWINNER IS DEAD OR INCAPACITATED.) OSD FIGURES FOLLOW:

PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST CONTROLLED AREA	NUMBER OF NEEDY AND DISPLACED FAMILIES
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NABATIYA	5623
BENT JBAIL	3785
MARJAYOUN	3591
TYRE	3610
SIDON	988
JEZZINE	286
ZAHRANI	2747
WEST BEIRUT AND SUBURBS	15,000
TOTAL	35,630

JAHN SAYS THIS MEANS ABOUT 200,000 DISPLACED INDIVIDUALS. (SIX TAKEN AS AVERAGE FAMILY SIZE.)

CHRISTIAN/SYRIAN CONTROLLED LEBANON	NUMBER OF NEEDY AND DISPLACED PERSONS
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EAST BEIRUT & SUBURBS UP TO JOUNIEH	100,000
JOUNIEH AND NORTH TO BATROUN	50,000
KOURA	30,000 APPROX, INCL
	9,000 IN TRIPOLI
AKKAR	FIGURES NOT AVAILABLE.
	SYRIANS SAID TAKING
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RELIEF MEASURES.

BEKAA NORTH OF BAALBEK	30,000
ZAHLE TO BAALBEK	10,000
SOUTH OF ZAHLE TO LITANI LAKE	20,000
TOTAL	240,000

4. JAHN SAYS HIS VISIT HAS CONVINCED HIM THAT THE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE IS NOW IN PLACE FOR BEGINNING LARGE-SCALE RELIEF PROGRAMS TO LEBANON. GOVERNMENT OFFICE OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF COMMITTEES ORGANIZED BY ICRC ARE OPERATIONAL IN BOTH ZONES OF

COUNTRY. THESE COMMITTEES ARE ACTIVE IN DISTRIBUTING GENERALLY SMALL-SCALE RELIEF SHIPMENTS PROVIDED BY THE ARAB STATES, WFP, ICRC, UNICEF AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES. JAHN'S IMPRESSION IS THAT SYSTEM WORKS BETTER IN CHRISTIAN AREA WHERE MORE VOLAGS ARE ACTIVE IN COOPERATION WITH OSD. THESE INCLUDE INTER-RELIGIOUS RELIEF COMMITTEE IN THE BEKAA WHICH HAS BEGUN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, AND SERIES OF MARONITE RELIEF CENTERS OPERATING IN CYPRUS AS WELL AS LEBANON.

5. JAHN SAYS ALL GROUPS TO WHOM HE SPOKE AGREED ON FOLLOWING PRIORITY NEEDS:

A. A. FOOD (SUGAR, RICE, FLOUR, LENTILS, MILK POWDER, CANNED GOODS).

B. BLANKETS. AT LEAST 200,000 TO BE SPLIT BETWEEN TWO ZONES.

C. CLOTHING. PRIORITY TO BABY CLOTHING AS MOST OTHER TYPES CAN BE PURCHASED IN LEBANON.

D. KITCHEN UTENSIL KITS, INNCLUDING KEROSENE STOVES AND KEROSENE.

E. WATER PUMPS. HUNDREDS OF PUMPS NEED REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT. SITUATION SAID ESPECIALLY CRITICAL IN BEKAA VALLEY FARMING AREAS.

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F. HOUSING. BOTH JAHN AND BULLE HAVE RECEIVED REQUESTS FOR TENTS, PARTICULARLY FROM SOUTH LEBANON. BOTH MEN OPPOSE USE OF TENTS AS NO GROUPS NOW LIVING IN THE OPEN AND TENTS WOULD PROVIDE SCANT PROTECTION AGAINST WINTER STORMS ON COASTAL PLAIN; SETTING UP TENT CAMPS COULD ALSO LEAD TO PERMANENT CAMPS AND FUUTURE POLITICAL PROBLEMS. AT PRESENT NO PERSONS (EXCEPT 1948 PALESTINIAN REFUGEES) ARE IN "CAMPS." BULLE EXPRESSED APPREHENSION OVER FACT THOUSANDS OF PERSONS LIVING IN HALLS, SCHOOLS AND OTHER PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN SOUTH LEBANON. THEIR PRESENCE WILL HINDER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN OCTOBER AND DRAFTY, UNSANITARY LIVING CONDITIONS WILL BE CONDUCIVE TO RESPIRATORY AND OTHER DISEASES DURING COMING WINTER. HE EMPHASIZES NEED FOR PRE-FABRICATED HOUSING AS WELL AS ROLLS OF PLAASTIC TO WEATHERIZE GLASSLESS WINDOWS. HE ESTIMATED THERE ARE ABOUT 20,000 REPAIRABLE RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES COUNTRY-WIDE AND URGES THAT AID BE PROVIDED TO ASSIST THE INHABITANTS TO REBUILD THEIR HOMES AND FOR THE HOMELESS TO CONSTRUCT NEW ONES.

G. MEDICAL PERSONNEL OF ALL TYPES. JAHN AFFIRMS
BASIC MEDICAL SUPPLIES ARE AVAILABLE. (COMMENT:
SITUATION GREATLY AMELIORATED BY ICRC ACTIVITIES AND
OFDA SHIPMENTS TO AUH WHICH HAVE BEEN SHARED ON AN AD
HOC BASIS WITH SOME 16 OTHER HOSPITALS.) LACK OF
SPECIALISTS EMPHASIZED BY INCOMPLETE SURVEY BULLE MADE
SHOWING AT LEAST 350 AMPUTEES IN NEED OF PROSTHETIC
ASSISTANCE, NO LONGER AVAILABLE IN LEBANON.

6. PALESTINIANS NOT ASSISTED UNDER OSD PROGRAM BUT
SEEM, JAHN SAYS, BY AND LARGE WELL CARED FOR BY ICRC
AND PALESTINIAN RELIEF AND MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS.
UNRWA NOW DISTRIBUTING 101,000 RATIONS, DOWN FROM
185,000 PREVIOUS TO OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR, AND HAS
ALSO PROVIDED SOME EMERGENCY RELIEF.

7. COMMENT: THOUGH OSD FIGURES MAY BE SOMEWHAT
INFLATED, NEED FOR RELIEF SERVICES TO DISPLACED AND
NEEDY PERSONS IS INDEED URGENT. A HIGH RATE OF INFLATIONN
(FOR EXAMPLE BEEF IN WEST BEIRUT IS NOW 18 LEBANESE
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POUNDS (LL) A KILO, UP FROM 10 LL ONE YEAR AGO, CHICKEN
IS UP TO 88 LL FROM 3 LL) COMBINED WITH AN ACUTE CASH
SHORTAGE DUE TO UNEMPLOYMENT AND BANK CLOSURE MAKES
THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE DEPENDENT ON THE GOODWILL OF
OTHERS. HUNDREDS OF FAMILIES IN RURAL AREAS ARE
SUPPORTING ONE OR TWO HOUSEHOLDS OF DISPLACED
RELATIVES FROM CITIES. THOUSANDS OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN
FACE A SECOND YEAR WITHOUT CLASSES DUE BOTH TO CLOSURE
OF SCHOOLS AND THEIR PARENTS' LACK OF TUITION FUNDS.
ADVENT OF WINTER, WITH HEAVY RAINS BEGINNING IN OCTOBER,
WILL BRING SEVERE HARDSHIP TO THE MANY LIVING IN SEMI-
EXPLOSED CONDITIONS. WE HAVE IMPRESSION ICRC HAS DONE
AN EXCELLENT JOB IN SETTING UP DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM FOR
FOOD AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO ALL AREAS OF LEBANON AND
WILL MAKE EFFORTIVE USE OF ANY ADDITONAL US FUNDS
PROVIDED THEM. HOWEVER, ICRC IS NOT ACTIVE IN
PROVIDING SHELTER FOR DISPLACED PERSONS AND THIS HAS
BECOME AN URGENT NEED. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT
PRIORITY CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO ASSISTANCE IN THIS
FIELD, TO INCLUDE BUILDING MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT
SUCH AS CEMENT BLOCK MAKING MACHINES, SO THAT PEOPLE
THEMSELVES CAN REBUILD. LANE
UNQTE. ROBINSON

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